

Concerned about anti-immigration provisions in the recently proposed H.R. 415, the "Real ID" bill, Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. today urged Congress "to reject the ill-advised proposal." Touted as a national security measure, the Congressman noted that "this bill would not have prevented a single 9/11 hijacker from obtaining a driver's license as they entered the country with valid visas and through fraud or consulate error.

"This is not a national security bill. The sponsors of this bill are trying to blur the lines between terrorists and immigrants. The 9/11 Commission, members of both parties in Congress, and the White House rejected the essence of this bill last year. We should have the good judgment to vote it down again.

"Unfortunately, the so called 'Real ID' bill misses its target. Instead of preventing terrorists from obtaining driver's licenses, the bill goes out of the way to burden hard-working, tax-paying immigrants."

Congressman Jackson stressed the importance of "a positive immigration agenda, one that includes a temporary worker program with a process for gaining permanent legal status and citizenship. He also highlighted the importance of reuniting families and enhancing remittance programs.

"Our country remains strong because of the contributions of immigrants. We need to support and embrace their efforts. Congressman Sensenbrenner's bill is a step in the wrong direction. It is certainly not the message that Mexican, Polish, and Indian immigrants in Chicago expected this new year," Jackson concluded.

According to Roosevelt University's Institute for Metropolitan Affairs, the Chicago region ranks seventh in the nation in immigrant population, with 1.4 million immigrants. The three largest immigrant groups in metropolitan Chicago are from Mexico, Poland, and India.